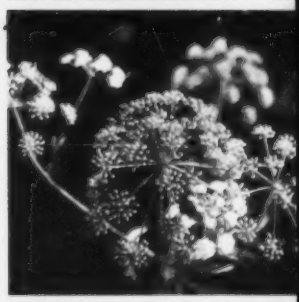

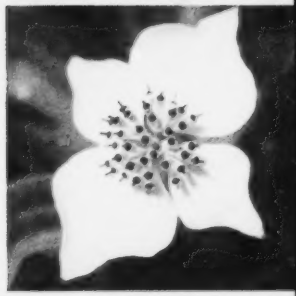

Seniors' Action Plan

Status Report

June 2003

Message from the Minister

103-05760/

The Seniors' Action Plan: Response to the Review of Programs and Services for Seniors, was released one year ago and I am pleased to provide you with this *Seniors' Action Plan Status Report*. This Status Report provides details on each action item, including dates, lead agency and the progress of each item up to the end of April 2003.

A major event resulting from the Action Plan was the Seniors' Forum held in Yellowknife in March 2003. This Forum brought together seniors from across the NWT to voice their concerns and discuss issues relevant to them and their community. The decisions and discussions that came from this Forum will help guide improvements to programs and services offered to seniors.

I look forward to keeping seniors and all NWT residents informed of our progress as we implement these actions and evaluate the outcomes.

J. Michael Miltenberger
Minister Responsible for Seniors

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Introduction

A review of the programs and services was concluded in June 2001, and out of this review, 28 recommendations formed the *Seniors' Action Plan* released in June 2002. This plan identifies deliverables and timelines for the following areas:

- A Voice for Seniors – actions to provide seniors an opportunity for input concerning their issues;
- Integration/Coordination of programs – actions to improve the organization between partners providing seniors' services;
- Improving Programs – actions to enhance existing programs by analysis and implementation of recommendations;
- Informing Seniors and the Public – actions to improve communications among seniors and the public at large; and
- Research and Policy Development – actions to research and develop a policy framework that represents seniors with dignity, independence, participation, fairness and security.

Much work has been done on each action item, and this *Status Report* details this work. This report has been posted on the public web site at www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca to ensure public access to this information. This report was released on the one year anniversary of the *Seniors' Action Plan*, during Seniors' Week in June 2003.

For more information on the *Seniors' Action Plan Status Report* or to request a copy of the *Status Report*, contact:

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A Voice for Seniors

1 Seniors' forum	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends the GNWT support the organization of a 'Seniors' Forum' once during the term of each assembly. **Action 1.1** GNWT and NWT Seniors' Society work together to identify appropriate time and agenda for initial Seniors' Forum.		
Status: The Seniors' Forum was held March 4-5, 2003, in Yellowknife.	January 2003 ✓ **complete**	COS*

2 Review of programs and services		
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT conduct a comprehensive review of Seniors' Programs and Services once during the term of each Assembly and prior to the Seniors' Forum. **Action 2.1** GNWT and NWT Seniors' Society work together to identify initial year to commence next review date, including Terms of Reference for future reviews.		
Status: Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services has put forward the recommendation that the next review take place in 2005/06, followed by a Seniors' Forum in 2006/07.	September 2002 ✓ **complete**	Minister Responsible for Seniors

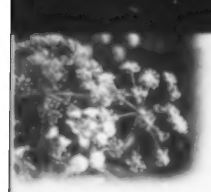
3 Community participation		
The Working Group recommends that GNWT departments increase their collaboration with the NWT Seniors Advisory Council and other existing seniors' organizations to identify ways to include and integrate seniors into the affairs and life of the community and society within which they reside. **Action 3.1** Encourage departments to facilitate regular meetings with community seniors' organizations.		
Status: NWT Seniors' Society representative is on the Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services. Committee members attended the Seniors' Forum held in March and attend the NWT Seniors' Society Annual General Meetings.	**ongoing**	NWT Seniors' Society

* Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services

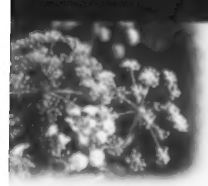
Integration/Coordination of Programs

4 Organization and administration of programs	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT identify options for organizing and administering seniors' programs within government, including:		
• the feasibility and implications of establishing a single point of entry at the community level, through technology and/or physical location;		
Action 4.1 Identify single point of entry including co-location of programs and services at the community level.		
Status: A discussion paper is being prepared on universal identity for seniors in the NWT and/or a seniors' identification card. The paper addresses feasibility factors and will consider potential options for single point of entry, current practices and projects nationally, NWT issues and applicability to seniors' programs and services. A draft of this paper will be ready in June.	June 2003 draft to Cabinet	Executive
• the feasibility and implications for consolidating all or some seniors' programs into one administrative unit;		
Action 4.2 Reject recommendation 4.2 in favour of coordinating committee (see recommendation #6).		
Status: Coordination of seniors' programs addressed in actions 6.1 and 6.2.	see actions 6.1 and 6.2	Executive
• the feasibility and implications of establishing a universal identification card and a single application form for seniors' programs.		
Action 4.3 Develop options to establish a universal identification system.		
Status: Options for a universal identification system addressed in action 4.1.	see action 4.1	Executive

5 Coordination at the community level	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that, where practical in a community, GNWT departments work in conjunction with appropriate organizations and service providers in communities in the NWT, and establish community seniors' coordinating committees with the mandate of providing better inter-departmental and agency coordination and services to seniors. The committees would meet as required to discuss issues of importance to seniors in the community. The committees would be chaired by a representative from Health and Social Services. Any reports, information or recommended actions arising from the work of the community seniors' planning committees would be forwarded to GNWT departments and to appropriate community organizations and local governments. **Action 5.1** Implement committees in communities interested in establishing seniors' coordinating committees in conjunction with the NWT Seniors' Society and specific community organizations, as appropriate.		
Status: The NWT Seniors' Society is encouraging the development of seniors' committees in the communities. The GNWT is working, in conjunction with the NWT Seniors' Society, to ensure seniors are adequately informed of services available in the community. Discussions were held at the Senior's Forum on the issues and challenges in establishing seniors organizations.	**ongoing**	NWT Seniors' Society



6 Departmental coordination	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT strengthen the interdepartmental approach through the Minister Responsible for Seniors by establishing a committee of officials for seniors' programs and services. The mandate of the committee is to ensure that seniors' programs and services are coordinated across the GNWT and that an inter-departmental approach is used by staff when addressing cross government seniors' issues and programs.		
Action 6.1 Establish committee with participating departments: Executive; Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Municipal and Community Affairs; NWT Housing Corporation and NWT Seniors' Society.		
Status: Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services established.	September 2002 ✓ **complete**	Health and Social Services
Action 6.2 Develop terms of reference for the Committee.		
Status: Terms of Reference developed.	September 2002 ✓ **complete**	Health and Social Services



7 Income assessment	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that based on the outcomes of the Public Housing-Income Assistance Harmonization Project, departments adopt standard criteria for assessing and determining eligibility for government programs.		
Action 7.1 Examine existing program standards for income assessment and set guidelines to be used across relevant departments.		
Status: *The Harmonization of Income Assistance and Public Housing,* using standard criteria in assessing income, will proceed no later than March 31, 2004.	April 2004	NWT Housing Corporation
Guidelines for income standards have been set.	January 2003 ✓ **complete**	Education, Culture and Employment
The Working Group further recommends that a scale of graduated benefits be adapted for GNWT income tested seniors' programs, where appropriate.		
Action 7.2 Review existing programs which contain income assessment criteria and determine where changes can be made to meet the standards.		
Status: Under *Harmonization of Income Assistance and Public Housing*, a scale of graduated benefits has been adapted for income-tested seniors where appropriate.	April 2004	NWT Housing Corporation
Reviewed existing income programs for seniors to ensure they met the income standards.	January 2003 ✓ **complete**	Education, Culture and Employment

Improving Programs

8 Standardized age of eligibility	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recognizes that seniors have requested that the age of 60 should become the standard age for accessing all GNWT programs and services for seniors. The Working Group also recognizes that significant cost implications could result from standardizing all programs to age 60. Based on the analysis detailed in this report, the Working Group recommends the GNWT not lower the age of eligibility to 60 years, in the following programs: Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit; Seniors' Property Tax Rebate; and Motor Vehicle Licensing.		
No further action required.	N/A	N/A
9 Consolidation of income support programs		
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT complete the analysis for the proposal to consolidate all income-tested financial supports into one single payment and administration system. **Action 9.1** Complete the analysis and make recommendations to Cabinet with respect to consolidation of income tested financial supports.		
Status: **DRAFT ANALYSIS COMPLETE March 2003** Analysis report of proposal to consolidate all income-tested financial supports into one single payment and administration system. Recommendations will be made to Cabinet once analysis is finalized.	June 2003	Education, Culture and Employment Executive

10 Inflation	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that income thresholds for seniors' financial/income supports reflect differences within the NWT in the cost of living, and cost increases due to inflation, by adjusting periodically to the Consumer Price Index. The Senior Citizen's Supplementary Benefit will be included in these periodic adjustments.		
Action 10.1 Develop annual schedule for review of inflationary pressures on financial/income supports.		
Status: The NWT Housing Corporation will implement an updated cost of living adjustment scale for calculating public housing rents. This adjustment reflects the factors of community and family size and will be revised periodically to maintain current cost differentials.	April 2003	NWT Housing Corporation
Income thresholds will continue to be reviewed periodically, and are community and family size specific.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	NWT Housing Corporation
An annual schedule for review of inflationary pressures on financial/income supports will be developed.	TBD	Education, Culture and Employment Executive

11 Adequacy of income	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT investigate the adequacy of income for seniors, focusing on: • the immediate financial concerns of seniors in need; • comparative levels of income and income supports across the country; • implications of the differences in income among seniors across the NWT including cost of living issues; • forecasting the levels of retirement income for the next generation of seniors; and • the applicability of adapting other systems or models of income support in the NWT (eg: including minimum or guaranteed income levels).		
Action 11.1 Prepare analysis of current seniors' income and estimates of income levels for future years.		
Status: Background paper is being developed and will focus on income needs of seniors over the next 20 years.	June 2003	Education, Culture and Employment

12 Seniors' home heating subsidy	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the Seniors' Home Heating Subsidy be reviewed annually and adjusted to account for length of the heating season by community. Further, the GNWT investigate the merit of consolidating all shelter benefits for residents living in private accommodation, who are deemed in need.		
Action 12.1 Review program annually, and explore potential for adjustments based on heating season by community.		
Status: Review of Home Heating Subsidy Program has been completed.	September 2002 ✓ **complete**	Education, Culture and Employment
NWT Housing Corporation will review consolidation of seniors' housing related programs for seniors living in private accommodations. Examples of programs include the property tax rebate and the home heating fuel subsidy. This work will be tied into work for action 9.1, on the consolidation of income support programs (see action 9.1).	March 2004	NWT Housing Corporation
Action 12.2 Prepare report examining options for consolidating all shelter benefits for seniors living in private accommodation.		
Status: See action 9.1	see action 9.1	Education, Culture and Employment

13 Independent living and housing needs		
The Working Group recommends the GNWT identify a long-term strategy, with public and private sector collaboration, for addressing the supply of seniors' independent living options.		
Action 13.1 NWT Housing Corporation to examine their Affordable Housing Strategy to ensure that it incorporates seniors' independent living options.		
Status: *The Affordable Housing Strategy* incorporates seniors' independent living options through the *Seniors' Independent Living Strategy*. This strategy was developed as a four year plan.	September 2002 ✓ **complete**	NWT Housing Corporation
Status: NWT Housing Corporation has reviewed *2000 Needs Survey* to assess seniors and affordability.	March 2003 ✓ **complete**	NWT Housing Corporation

14 Housing repair and maintenance	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT improve seniors' awareness of and accessibility to government assisted home repair and maintenance programs and options in order to promote the principle of seniors' independent living.		
Action 14.1 Enhance public education and information campaign to outline programs and services available to seniors.		
Status: Information campaign initiated through newspaper ads, radio ads and brochure developed to outline programs and services available to seniors.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	NWT Housing Corporation
Further, the repair and maintenance programs of the NWT Housing Corporation will be reviewed on a periodic basis.		
Action 14.2 Establish a regular schedule to review repair and maintenance programs.		
Status: The *Seniors and/or Disabled Preventative Maintenance Initiative* includes an annual visit by NWT Housing Corporation staff.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	NWT Housing Corporation

15 Continuing care framework	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the *Continuing Care Framework* currently being developed by the GNWT include:		
Home care: Use of *First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Initiative* to enhance home care services to all NWT residents. This includes the communication of program information and the continued training of home care workers.		
Action 15.1 Continue to enhance home care programs. Publish educational and communication materials regarding home and community care program activities.		
Status: Ongoing homecare program includes resources from the GNWT and federal government.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	Health and Social Services
Long term care: Current and future needs for long term care and respite services to enable the elderly to stay in their homes, or those of their families, for as long as possible.		
Action 15.2 Complete the long term care needs assessment to identify number of facility beds required, and types of programs needed for the next 5-10 years for inclusion in the *Continuing Care Framework.*		
Status: *Long Term Care Needs Assessment Report* indicated that clients in facilities required increased levels of service due to medical and cognitive issues. Long term care facilities received additional resources to meet this demand.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	Health and Social Services
Long Term Care Needs Assessment Report was completed to identify facility needs in the NWT. Refer to 15.1.		

15 (continued)	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The cognitively impaired: A program of support for families, spouses, and other persons when the cognitively impaired are living at home. Additionally, the GNWT examine options for housing the cognitively impaired.		
Action 15.3 Address rehabilitation services through the service delivery component of the *NWT Health and Social Services System Action Plan.*		
Status: *Report on Review of NWT Rehabilitation Services has been completed.* This information is being used to outline health and social service needs in communities.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	Health and Social Services
Rehabilitation services: Increased access to physiological, occupational and other medical and rehabilitative services and specialists, based on need for all ages.		
Action 15.4 Finalize overall Continuing Care Framework.		
Status: *Continuing Care Framework* was completed 2002. This information is being used to plan for homecare, supported living and facility living services.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	Health and Social Services
Palliative care: Develop and provide information, training and support to families, caregivers and the general public regarding end-of-life issues for all ages.		
Action 15.5 Train health care workers and other professionals to support families, caregivers and the general public respecting end-of-life issues.		
Status: Currently there are 56 home support workers in the process of receiving certification.	✓ **complete and ongoing**	Health and Social Services
A palliative care conference was held in February 2003 for NWT professionals and other caregivers.		

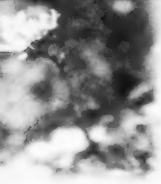
16 Extended health benefits	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends the GNWT review the benefits currently within the Extended Health Benefits program, and, further, recommends adjustment to the following components of the EHB program, if and when appropriate: • medical travel benefits; • medical escorts; and • medical supplies, devices, and aids.		
Action 16.1 Examine the needs of seniors in the overall context of the review of Supplemental Health Benefits currently underway.		
Status: Draft Discussion Paper on Supplementary Health Benefits to go to Standing Committee on Social Programs in June 2003.	June 2003 ✓ **complete**	Health and Social Services
Currently developing the consultation process.		
17 Employment		
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT identify solutions to the employment and lifestyle problems experienced by some seniors in the NWT, and those approaching their senior years who have difficulty maintaining employment.		
Action 17.1 Assess the difficulties faced by older workers in the NWT and adjust current programming to respond to their needs.		
Status: Currently assessing difficulties faced by older workers in the NWT and adjusting current programming to respond to their needs.	**ongoing**	Education, Culture and Employment
Action 17.2 Collaborate with federal government on employment initiatives for near-seniors.		
Status: *Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative* is currently underway. It is a joint partnership with Human Resource Development Canada and Education, Culture and Employment to assist seniors aged 55 to 64 who are unemployed or about to become unemployed, with the opportunity to obtain skills, services and support in finding employment.	**ongoing**	Education, Culture and Employment

Informing Seniors and the Public

18 Transportation	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends the importance for all concerned parties to identify and fund transportation options in those communities where transportation is a barrier to seniors participating in the activities of daily living.		
Action 18.1 Examine transportation issues and prepare options that may assist communities.		
Status: *Report on Local Special Needs Transportation* finalized. Municipal and Community Affairs has introduced a new Community Initiatives Program through which non-taxed based communities can apply for funding to assist with local transportation needs for seniors (and other groups).	Spring 2003 ✓ **complete**	Municipal and Community Affairs
Municipal and Community Affairs to provide options through approved *Active Living Strategy.*		Department of Transportation
19 Communication and information		
The Working Group recommends the GNWT enhance the current approaches departments use to communicate and inform seniors and the public about programs, services, and activities relevant to seniors in the Northwest Territories.		
Action 19.1 Establish a communications plan for informing seniors and the general public about programs and services.		
Status: The Department will be working with the NWT Seniors' Society to identify common needs. *Seniors' Information* (action 19.2) and the website (action 20.1) support this work.	**ongoing**	COS*
Action 19.2 Update the Seniors' Handbook annually.		
Status: Handbook will be reviewed annually and the web/online information (as presented on the senior' website) will be update as required. New hardcopy editions will be printed every three years.	**ongoing**	COS*

* Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services

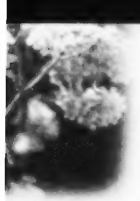
20 Seniors' database	Completion Date	Lead Responsibiiity
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT support the establishment of a website of seniors' information. The website will include program and service information, demographic information, national linkages, and any relevant information for seniors in the NWT. **Action 20.1** Modify existing website.		
Status: **The Canadian Seniors' Policies and Programs Database is updated regularly and the Department will work with the NWT Seniors' Society to develop a seniors section online that references NWT seniors' programs and services, as well as online links and resources.**	July 2003	Health and Social Services
21 Elder abuse		
The Working Group acknowledges that abuse of older adults is an issue in the Northwest Territories and recommends that, as a priority, the GNWT support a public awareness campaign to be implemented and delivered in collaboration with the NWT Seniors Society and/or other appropriate organizations. The public awareness campaign on the abuse of elderly persons in the NWT may include community-based workshops and educational and informational materials. **Action 21.1** Collaborate with the Department of Health and Social Services regarding the Addictions, Family Violence and Mental Health Framework and incorporate a public awareness campaign involving Elder Abuse.		
Status: **The NWT Seniors' Society has delivered its initial Respect for Elders Workshop in March 2003. Education materials will be developed to communicate this issue to the public.**	**ongoing**	NWT Seniors' Society



21 (continued)	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
Workshops should be delivered at the readiness and request of the community. **Action 21.2** Offer training and workshops to community societies on elder abuse in cooperation with the NWT Seniors' Society, at the readiness of communities.		
Status: A plan will be developed to deliver workshops as needed throughout the NWT.	**ongoing**	NWT Seniors' Society
The Working Group also suggests that the GNWT specifically include and/or cite the protection of elderly persons in the development of any future Protection Against Family Violence legislation. **Action 21.3** Work with NWT Seniors' Society to develop workshop and training criteria.		
Status: The NWT Seniors' Society will work with communities to deliver workshops.	**ongoing**	NWT Seniors' Society
22 Seniors-friendly workshops		
Knowledge of the lifestyle issues seniors face is a critical piece of the way society in general understands and responds to our elderly population. Seniors-friendly educational workshops and information are a way to sensitize and educate the general population to the needs of NWT seniors. The Working Group recommends that the GNWT continue to support the NWT Seniors Society to deliver 'seniors-friendly' workshops, and that the workshops be delivered in the schools of the NWT and within the public and private sectors. **Action 22.1** Work with NWT Seniors' Society to identify specific needs, including resource requirements to offer seniors friendly workshops.		
Status: NWT Seniors' Society has developed a senior friendly workshop. The NWT Seniors' Society will work with communities to deliver workshops.	**ongoing**	NWT Seniors' Society

23 Retirement planning	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
Pre-retirement and retirement planning can have a positive influence on the lives of future seniors. As such, the Working Group recommends that the GNWT develop an education and public awareness program focusing on retirement planning issues.		
Action 23.1 Develop and distribute public awareness program focusing on retirement planning.		
Status: An information session on living wills and powers of attorney was held during the Seniors' Forum.	**ongoing**	COS*
24 Consolidation of toll free lines		
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT and the NWT Seniors' Society examine the feasibility of consolidating the toll free numbers currently used by seniors to contact government regarding programs and services.		
Action 24.1 Examine the feasibility of consolidating seniors' toll-free lines for seniors' programs and services.		
Status: Due to technological difficulties with consolidating the lines, Education, Culture and Employment has included a voice mail on its 1-800 line that provides the seniors' toll free contact information.	October 2002 ✓ **complete**	Education, Culture and Employment NWT Seniors' Society
25 Volunteerism		
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT continue to work with community organizations to encourage the role of volunteerism in communities and to enhance the participation of all members of society in supporting elderly persons.		
Action 25.1 Committee of officials for seniors' programs develop a workplan to implement this recommendation. Workplan should link with the *NWT Volunteer Strategy.*		
Status: *The NWT Volunteer Support Initiative (Strategy)* is currently under development – expected completion date is August 2003.	**ongoing**	Municipal and Community Affairs

* Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services



Research and Policy Development

26 Research

	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT continue to conduct research into issues affecting seniors' programming and quality of life, including but not limited to: • The nature of demographic change in the NWT and its impacts on programming; • Innovative program delivery models; and • Other program planning issues requiring		
Action 26.1 Identify research plan addressing critical issues and trends affecting seniors in the NWT.		
Status: *A Profile of NWT Seniors* identifies pressure points, trends and communicates projections for seniors in the NWT.	April 2003	COS*
Action 26.2 Release seniors' report profiling demographics, trends and health needs of NWT seniors.		
Status: *A Profile of NWT Seniors* has been released in June 2003.	June 2003 ✓ **complete**	Health and Social Services

* Committee of Officials for Seniors' Programs and Services

27 Program principles	Completion Date	Lead Responsibility
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT adopt the principles of the *National Framework on Aging* into a policy framework for seniors' programs and services: • ***dignity*** – being treated with respect, regardless of the situation; • ***independence*** – being in control of one's life; being able to do as much for oneself as possible; • ***participation*** – getting involved, staying active and taking part in the community; • ***fairness*** – having seniors' real needs, in all their diversity, considered equally to those of other Canadians; • ***security*** – having adequate income as one ages, and having access to a safe and supportive living environment. **Action 27.1** Agreed as per Recommendation 28 (Policy Framework).		
Status: This action will be addressed as part of action 28.1.	see action 28.1	Health and Social Services
28 Policy framework		
The Working Group recommends that the GNWT adopt a policy framework for the development of seniors' programs, as outlined in the model described on page 21 of the *Review of Programs and Services for Seniors*. **Action 28.1** Develop policy framework applicable to all GNWT programs and services for seniors. Submit for Cabinet approval.		
Status: The Policy Framework was reviewed with community delegates at the Seniors' Forum. A draft framework will be developed for Cabinet review.	June 2003 draft to Cabinet	Health and Social Services